

**WASHINGTON, DC** - U.S. Rep. Charlie Melancon announced that St. Bernard Parish will receive \$104,045,495.38 in federal disaster aid grants from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The grants will reimburse the Parish for public utility replacement, housing demolition and debris removal, and rebuilding and repair costs following Hurricane Katrina. April 30, 2007  
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**WASHINGTON, DC** - U.S. Rep. Charlie Melancon announced that St. Bernard Parish will receive \$104,045,495.38 in federal disaster aid grants from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The grants will reimburse the Parish for public utility replacement, housing demolition and debris removal, and rebuilding and repair costs following Hurricane Katrina.

**"The projects that these grants will fund represent the wide array of post-storm recovery needs in St. Bernard Parish due to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita," Rep. Melancon said**

**. "Whether it's replacing a high school gym, tearing down severely damaged houses, or repairing a damaged public utility system, these projects will all improve the quality of life for residents of St. Bernard and help the community return to normal. I commend the hard-working people in the Parish and all of south Louisiana who continue to struggle, day after day, to rebuild their communities and bring back our way of life."**

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The following federal grants were announced recently:

**- \$5,305,500.00 To Extend Temporary Pump-Out And Sewage Hauling While Sewage System Is Being Repaired (St. Bernard Parish).** Hurricane Katrina caused a storm surge in the Intercoastal Waterway which breached the levee and caused up to 25 feet of flooding in St. Bernard Parish. The entire parish sewage collection system was fully submerged. 90 of the 92 lift stations contained within the sewage system were damaged and out of operation. This grant will fund a time extension for the temporary removal of raw sewage from lift stations until the system is repaired. This will extend the program, originally slated to end January 1, through June 30, 2007.

- **\$67,884,734.70 For Demolition and Debris Removal of 5,399 Severely Damaged Homes. (St. Bernard Parish).** A storm surge and flooding from Hurricane Katrina caused extensive damage throughout St. Bernard Parish. Approximately 12,000 of the 27,000 homes within the parish were determined to be damaged beyond repair. Because these damaged homes represented a threat to public safety, they were slated for demolition by the parish. This grant will reimburse the parish for the cost of demolition and debris removal for 5,399 homes in the parish that were damaged beyond repair. This grant will also be used for utility disconnections, disposal of hazardous materials (including Freon and asbestos), hauling, reduction, and site management. Demolitions covered by this grant have occurred or will occur between January 1, 2007, and August 31, 2007, and will create an estimated 1.5 million cubic yards (CY) of debris.
  
- **\$8,448,908.47 For Monitoring The Demolition And Debris Removal Of an Additional 5,590 Homes Damaged Beyond Repair (St. Bernard Parish).** This grant will reimburse the parish for monitoring the demolition and debris removal for an additional 5,590 damaged homes beginning January 1, 2007 and concluding August 31, 2007. The work includes asbestos inspections, reporting, and testing services that has been or will be performed by contractors.
  
- **9,241,610.59 For Monitoring The Demolition And Debris Removal Of 4,105 Homes Damaged Beyond Repair (St. Bernard Parish).** This grant will reimburse the parish for monitoring the demolition and debris removal for 4,105 homes that were damaged beyond repair. Demolitions were conducted from October 1, 2005 to December 31, 2006, and resulted in 1,128, 875 cubic yards of construction and demolition debris.
  
- **\$5,665,043.41 For Repairing Trist Middle School (St. Bernard Parish School Board).** High winds and a storm surge from Hurricane Katrina caused extensive damage to Trist Middle School's two-story main building and one-story classroom addition, resulting in a total of 76,886 square-feet of damage. This grant will reimburse the school board for repairing the school's damaged roof, ceilings, flooring, windows, walls, doors, classroom fixtures, wooden stage, wooden bleachers, counters, shelving, cabinetry, aluminum canopies, bathroom fixtures, and all plumbing, electrical, mechanical, communications, fire alarm and security systems. The main building was constructed in the 1960s, with the additional classroom being added in 1998.
  
- **\$7,499,698.21 For Repairing Internal Damage To Andrew Jackson High School (St. Bernard Parish School Board).** Winds and floodwaters from Hurricane Katrina damaged the campus of Andrew Jackson High School. The grant will reimburse the parish school board for the cost of repairs to the 97,000 square-foot main facility, as well as the 33,000 square-foot gymnasium. Both facilities suffered damage to roofing, doors, windows,

walls, flooring, and ceilings, as well as electrical, mechanical, and heating and air conditioning systems. Also damaged in the main building were classrooms, band and choir rooms, the kitchen, cafeteria, library, and offices. Damaged within the gymnasium were a stage, gym area, and locker rooms. The grant also includes three cost-effective hazard mitigation projects: elevating the air conditioner chillers above flood level, replacing damaged drywall with water and mold resistant concrete masonry units, and providing for wind-resistant aluminum curtains to protect the building's windows.

Rep. Melancon has worked in Congress to further reduce the financial burden on local governments in south Louisiana struggling to recover after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Under the federal Robert T. Stafford Act, public assistance projects like those announced today require a 10 percent cost share from local governments upfront before the remaining 90 percent in federal grant money can be used. Many of the estimated 23,000 disaster recovery projects in Louisiana have been put on hold because local governments don't have the resources to provide the match.

Rep. Melancon worked with House leadership to include language waiving this local match requirement in the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations bill, which was passed by the House and Senate last week. Waiving the local 10% match requirement would free up an estimated \$800 million for Louisiana to invest in critical needs, like repairing and rebuilding police stations, fire stations and other important infrastructure. The local match requirement has been waived 32 times since 1985 when per capita rebuilding costs have been deemed excessive.

Rep. Melancon also made sure language was included in the *Gulf Coast Hurricane Housing Recovery Act of 2007*,

passed by the House on March 21

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, to cut the red tape that was preventing the state of Louisiana from using already appropriated federal funding to help local governments pay their local match for rebuilding projects.

In addition, Rep. Melancon successfully lobbied House leadership to include language in the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations bill making Katrina- and Rita-affected communities eligible for Community Disaster Loan forgiveness. An estimated \$1 billion in CDLs were provided by the federal government to hurricane-affected local governments immediately following Katrina and Rita to help them continue daily operations, such as payroll for law enforcement and emergency responders. Many local governments do not have the ability to repay this massive debt, as their tax bases were devastated by the storms. Rep. Melancon

has argued that, in the past, CDs have been forgiven following many other major disasters, including Hurricane Andrew and the September 11<sup>th</sup> terrorist attacks. The Emergency Supplemental bill is currently being considered by the President.

**"The recovery and rebuilding of south Louisiana will not happen overnight. It will take patience, persistence, and due diligence on the part of all of our citizens,"** said Rep. Melancon. **"But it is the strength and determination of our people that will make the recovery so successful in the end."**

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